

LABOUR

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CONTENTS

Youth and the Party

1949's Little General Election

Friern Barnet's U.D.C. Victory

An Agent's First Job

We Need More T.U. Money

Bexley's Big Drive

Barking's Recruiting Plan

Agents' Union Conference

Kingston's Socialist Week

Tribute to Labour's Women

• J. W. RAISIN ON
POLLING YOUR VOTE

SITUATIONS VACANT

FAVERSHAM D.L.P. — Applications are invited for the post of **Full-time Agent**. Salary and conditions in accordance with National Agreement. Application forms from **Mr. G. S. Thilthorpe, J.P., 31 Waterloo Road, Sittingbourne, Kent**, to whom they must be returned not later than May 31st, 1948.

HENLEY D.L.P. — Applications are invited for the post of **Secretary-Agent**. Salary and conditions in accordance with National Agreement. Application forms from **Mr. L. V. Pike, "East and West," Wain Hill, Chinnor, Oxon.**, to whom they must be returned not later than May 24th, 1948.

NORTH KENSINGTON D.L.P. invite applications for post of **Full-time Secretary-Agent** under National Agreement terms. Application forms from **Treasurer, North Kensington Labour Party, 92, Ladbrooke Grove, London, W.11**, to be returned by 20th May, 1948.

EAST FULHAM D.L.P. Applications are invited for the post of **Secretary-Agent**. Salary and conditions in accordance with National Agreement. Application forms from **Coun. H. R. Jones, 131, Dawes Road, London, S.W.6**, to whom they must be returned not later than Saturday, 5th June, 1948.

ASHTON - UNDER - LYNE D.L.P. invites applications for the post of **Agent and Secretary**. Salary and conditions in accordance with National Agreement. Application forms and details may be obtained from **Secretary, Labour Rooms, Park Street, Ashton-under-Lyne**, and must be returned not later than 22nd May, 1948.

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ACTON D.L.P. — Applications are invited for the post of **Full-time Agent**. Salary and conditions in accordance with National Agreement. Forms upon which application is to be made can be obtained from **Mr. H. V. Twitchin, 5,**

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YOUTH AND THE PARTY

ARE we getting enough keen young folk into the Party as active members? We feel sure that there will be a pretty unanimous "No" on that point from all parts of the country. Yet there is very little agreement on what to do about it, though clearly it is a matter of prime importance.

The Tories report that membership of their Young Conservative branches now tops the 100,000 mark. Maybe some of these "Young" Tories look to our simple eyes to be nearer forty than twenty, but, nevertheless, the fact remains that the Opposition is having some success in attracting the younger generation unto its ranks.

Our own League of Youth, with an age limit of 21, has groups of lively, energetic, and promising young people in a good many areas. But, nevertheless, its total membership is far too small—certainly for a Party of our standing.

It is possible that the raising of the League age limit to 25 would help. There would seem to be a case for this now, in view of the call-up at 18 and the consequent difficulty in officering League branches. The matter will, of course, be discussed at the Party Conference over Whitsun.

But raising the age limit by itself won't solve the problem, which we feel sure can be best tackled by the D.L.P.s themselves. Most parties have in their ranks one or more persons with both the ability to lead and the knack of getting on with young folk. Young ex-Servicemen, with experience perhaps of discussion group work, would obviously come to the mind in this connection. But there are hundreds of others in our D.L.P.s with no such formal experience who could do the job splendidly. It should be our job to seek out these youth leaders.

Anyway, what do you think? Reg Underhill, who has had considerable experience of League of Youth work, puts forward some suggestions in this issue. Let's also have your views on how best we can attract youth into our ranks.

Send your proposals and suggestions on this vital question to the Editor and we shall publish a selection of views next month.

Know Your Vote: Poll Your Vote

By J. W. RAISIN, London District Organiser

The title of this article is not original. I first saw it in *Labour Organiser* used by Herbert Drinkwater about 20 years ago. It is still the best short title for an article dealing with the purpose and organisation of an election committee room.

But my article is not intended to cover the whole subject. What I want to deal with is the polling-day arrangement—the “POLL YOUR VOTE” side of this slogan.

Of course, the first part—the “Know your vote” side—must have been carried out. As the Clerk-in-Charge of your Committee Room you have been steadily building up your promise throughout the campaign and if, as I would hope, you have been using the individual canvass card system, you have now had some hundreds or thousands of cards, bearing a cross in the “For” column, available for use as bringing-up-cards on polling day. If you have done your work well you have there a very fair indication of the body of Labour support in your district. It does not matter whether these are a majority or minority of the electorate. What is important is that there is a card in the canvass box for every elector who will vote for us *if he votes at all*.

Controlling the Work

Up to polling-day you will be counting each new promise as an addition to your assets. At the opening of the poll these must be seen, instead, as liabilities. Your success, on polling-day must be measured by the extent to which your liability is redeemed.

My object in writing this article is to call attention to the supreme importance of first-class control in the Polling-Day Committee Room. Now, let me say at once that “first-class” does not mean “high-powered.” It simply means that the small group of workers actually working in the room are able to do what is needed.

And that is? To keep the promise cards “clean.” That is, practically, all there is to it. To send out each knocker-up with cards which contain the minimum number of electors who have actually voted. It ought not to

be difficult and it is not difficult. But it does demand speed, accuracy and some tact.

As I say, I like the individual canvass-card for doing the actual canvassing, using the “Fors” as bringing-up cards. This is much better than a household bringing-up card. It has the merit, too, that it can be written up in the early stages of the election and not rushed through just before polling day with possible errors in writing. And it can be used in later elections, just altering the register number.

Assuming that you do work in this way, you have a card for every promise secured during the campaign. You will then make a mark on your marking-off sheets (much better than pages of the register) against the number of each promise. I like a vertical red line, not horizontal. This can then be continuous where a group of electors are Labour.

When you come to cross off the number, you do so without obliterating this mark and that is important as we shall see. I like a blue or black pencil for crossing off. It is easier to use than a red pencil and far less trying to the eyes. There is no value in making any marks other than for promises. *All you want to know is: which of your promises have not yet voted.* There is nothing whatever to be gained by crossing off supporters in one colour, opponents in another, and “doubtfuls” in a third. The effect may be quite pretty but it won’t have brought a single extra Labour voter to the poll!

Cards on the Table

So now we have:

- The bringing-up cards—either in a box or, as I prefer it, spread out, in bundles on the table.
- The marking-off board, with the Labour promises all marked.

This means that there is a card on the table for every red mark on the board.

It is a useful thing to write the name of the street alongside of the numbers on your marking-off board. This enables you to see at a glance how any street is doing.

You want in addition:

- (c) Your register of electors (which should have been fully marked up during the campaign with all relevant information—Fors, Againsts, Doubtfuls, Deaths, Removals, etc.).
- (d) A clear street plan of your district, showing the location of your Committee Room and of the Polling Station.

Your Committee Room equipment is then complete.

Turn now to the Polling Station. I mean, the Number Taker.

This job is the most important after that of the Clerk-in-Charge himself.

I have seen more bad than good number-takers, yet the whole organisation depends on the accuracy of this worker. Let the member charged with this job be quick, intelligent and of reasonably good presence. Let him above all be of good hearing and able to write numbers legibly! A good number-taker, working intelligently with the other side, can get at least 80% of the numbers.

Poll Cards

Of course, many electors will give up their poll cards (and may continue to do so even when it is an Official card, issued by the R.O.). Where this is done, it is not necessary, and indeed it makes for confusion, for the number to be written also. The number-taker should not send both a number on a slip, and a poll-card to the Committee Room in respect of the same voter.

Turn back to the Committee Room. Here is the Clerk-in-Charge with one or perhaps two assistants. No more are needed except for polling districts with an exceptionally large number of promises (not electors).

The Clerk-in-Charge will supervise, leaving it to one of his assistants to do the marking-off. The Clerk needs to be free to handle the cards, particularly in the rush hours. Remember: the real purpose of the Committee Room organisation is to keep the knockers-up at work, calling on Labour supporters who have not yet voted.

How It Is Done

Procedure is generally most efficient when it is kept simple and committee room work is no exception. This is how it works:

- (1) A sheet of numbers, with some poll cards, comes from the polling station.
- (2) One man calls them out, and an-

other marks them off. When a number on the marking off sheet carries a red mark against it he says "For" and the caller puts a tick against that number on the number-sheet or on the poll card.

- (3) The numbers with a tick represent the Labour promises in that batch of voters. There will therefore be a card for each of them. These will now be extracted and thrown into a box under the table. The number sheet will then be crossed through to indicate that it has been dealt with.

- (4) But when a batch of cards is out in the hands of a knocker up, this cannot be done. Some people then make lists of such numbers with the object of extracting when the cards return. I find this a tedious and unnecessary elaboration. My method is to secure all bundles of cards as the knocker-up brings them in and, as soon as possible, run through them, looking over the shoulder of the marker-off, and extracting any polled labour promises. This is where the method of marking I recommended is helpful. It is only the number with a red vertical mark, crossed through with a blue horizontal mark that you are concerned with. These are quite readily discernible without interfering with the marker-off in his work.

- (5) The Clerk-in-Charge "handles" the knockers-up. He takes their cards firmly from them when they come in, and he gives them another batch, all cleaned up—and he ushers them from the room, just showing them the map on their way out.

He doesn't take a batch from one worker, clean it up and give it to another. The former will straightway protest that he has just "done" it. No! He waits until that worker has gone out and then he gives it to the next man in!

- (6) Generally speaking, no notice is taken of statements about electors having voted. If the number comes through, his card will be extracted. Of course, there must be exceptions to this, but they should be few.

I have been assured, with fervour, that *every* promise had been polled in a street when, in fact that eventual poll for the district was as low as 60%.

That is the "standard" system of polling day organisation. Other methods may be as good. None is better. It has worked well in the past and has indeed "Polled your Vote."

I have heard it said that all these systems break down at about 6.30 in the evening. I want to say that there is, in my experience, no justification whatever for such a statement. I insist that it is the lack of system which breaks down.

"Trial" Elections Needed

This is demonstrably true. The strain must clearly be felt in the larger districts. Assume that your polling district has 8,000 electors (and few are nearly so large). Assume you have a 75% poll. And assume that half of these vote between 5.30 and 8.30 p.m. This would mean that in that period, the committee room would have to handle about 3,000 numbers. This works out at about 16 or 17 per minute and this, I contend, is quite practicable.

It is, moreover, the greatest speed ever likely to be required. During this three hour period there would be a peak in the polling-curve, higher than this average rate but that would not, necessarily, produce a break-down at that point. At most, it would mean that there was, for a little while, a back log of undealt with numbers.

There is nothing mysterious, nothing even complicated about the functioning of a polling-day committee room. Yet it is true to say that its mishandling may lose an election. The details can be mastered in an hour by any person of average intelligence, but, when it comes to high-speed operation, it is practical experience—and a lot of it—that counts. *Hitherto, such practice has only been available at actual elections but this is not good enough. We should think it odd if firemen could learn their duties only at actual fires! We must institute demonstrations and drills so that our workers can attain the highest possible level of efficiency in their vital function.*

THE NEW APPOINTMENTS

Pat Cavanaugh, newly-appointed Administrative Assistant to the National Agent, has for the past six years been employed by the T.U.C. Brought up in a strong Socialist family, he joined the Navy in 1928 when only 16 and remained in the Service until discharged on medical grounds in 1941. For eight years he served in submarines, and during the Norwegian campaign was a member of the crew of the famous "Triton" which torpedoed several German troopships.

Since he returned to civilian life, Pat has been active in his local Party. Since 1943 he has served on the Executive Committee of West Leyton D.L.P. and has been secretary of Leyton Trades Council and Labour Party. At the General Election of 1945 he acted as Assistant Agent in West Leyton (where no full-time agent was employed) and has also had considerable experience in control of municipal and county council elections.

Mr. N. G. Atkinson, who has been appointed full-time agent at Barrow, is aged 26 and has held several offices in his local Party. In 1945 he was elected the first Labour councillor for Moss Side West. By profession a draughts-

man and production engineer, Mr. Atkinson has been active in the A.E.U.

Mr. A. R. Burnham, who becomes full-time agent for King's Lynn, has been active in the Wells Division of Somerset, where he has held all offices except that of full-time agent. Since demobilisation Mr. Burnham has been a district agent of the Co-operative Insurance Society. He is aged 32.

Mr. H. G. Grierson, who has been agent at High Wycombe for the past year, has been appointed agent for Reading. Aged 48, Mr. Grierson has been active in the Party for 26 years. From 1935 to 1945 he was secretary of the Goole Labour Party and in 1945 was appointed deputy general secretary of Reading Labour Party. He has been a member of the N.U.R. for 26 years and has held the office of branch president.

Mr. E. R. D. Harris, who is 26, becomes full-time agent for Shipley. He has been a member of Bristol Labour Party for 12 years and has held numerous Party offices. By employment a grocery assistant in Bristol Co-operative Society, he has also been an active member of Bristol Retail Branch of U.S.D.A.W.

The Little General Election

By JOHN PINKERTON

Nearly 9,000 local elections are due to be fought next spring.

The passing of the Representation of the People Bill and the alteration of the dates of all local elections will mean that in April and May, 1949, a little General Election will be held in the country. This election will, without doubt, be a pointer to the Parliamentary General Election of 1950.

Elections will be held in April in the 62 Administrative Counties, and in May in 33 Scottish Counties, 83 County Boroughs, 4 Scottish County Boroughs, 500 Municipal Boroughs, 28 Metropolitan Boroughs, 572 Urban Districts, 475 Rural Districts, 201 Scottish Districts and 7,000 Parishes; a total of 8,958 elections.

The task before the Party is a colossal one and we shall need all our skill, energy and enthusiasm to achieve victory.

An analysis of the past Municipal and District Election figures show that more votes will be required to be cast for Labour in 1949 than in 1945 and 46, if we are to hold or win seats. We have instances of candidates who were returned in 1945 with 800 votes, polling 1,200 votes in 1947 and losing the seats.

This points to the fact that our opponents' organisation has been considerably improved and is being still further improved. We must lose no time in overhauling our own election machinery, and see that it is in good trim for the big fight ahead. We can rest assured that our opponents will put in every ounce of effort to win back control of councils, and a sweeping victory for them might well influence the General Election.

Selecting Candidates

Now is the time to make preparations and an immediate start should be made to select candidates of the right calibre and ability. Make your choice with care, secure candidates with experience, enthusiasm, capacity and ability, rather than those with no other claim than 40 years' membership of the Party. Don't overlook either youth or age if the other qualifications are there.

Start with your open-air propaganda

meetings, with speakers able to explain the policy of the Party in a constructive and instructive manner, explain the Government's policy in Housing, Health Services, etc., give the reasons for the shortages, don't just blame the Government for the shortcomings of your own local policy. Keep the electorate supplied with information on the achievement of your Labour-controlled Council through leaflets distributed at regular intervals, excite their enthusiasm and civic pride. Where a Labour Council is not in control, hammer home your policy on every conceivable occasion in order that your ideas and proposals become familiar and acceptable to the electorate.

Make certain that you are going to have sufficient well-trained election workers and begin the training now. Arrange practical classes in canvassing, committee room work and instruct your polling and counting agents in the work they will be called upon to do.

Shock Troops

Now that the Bill provides that each candidate in Municipal elections shall appoint an election agent, endeavour to secure members for this job who have some knowledge of the law of elections, and get them to brush up their knowledge, because the law will be considerably altered by the new Bill, and seats may be lost through ignorance of the law.

Look into your stocks of stationery, canvass-cards and other election material, and secure new supplies as early as possible rather than wait to the last minute only to find that they are unobtainable.

Organise teams of shock troops from the Boroughs to go into the county areas to assist in the County Council election campaign. Loss of seats there may make all the difference between winning or losing the Borough and District elections.

These elections will place a heavy strain on the Movement and the test will be one of the greatest we have ever met. We can win them only if we start fighting NOW.

Organising Our U.D.C. Victory

By MARGARET RICHARDS, Secretary, Friern Barnet L.L.P.

Friern Barnet was one of the few London suburban areas to chalk up a Labour gain at the U.D.C. elections. Here is how their energetic campaign was organised.

Ours is a predominantly Tory suburb. Two out of the five wards, however, have a chancy, working- and middle-class population, and our Party decided to fight all five seats but to concentrate on these two wards only. It meant leaving the others "fallow" except for delivering the Election Address, but we were rewarded by returning the retiring Labour Councillor in the South Ward, and winning a seat in the Central Ward by 35 votes on a 56% poll. The electors in this ward number 4,269.

The campaign really began after our defeat last year. During 1947, by canvassing, we not only increased the Central Ward membership from 211 to 502, but we also gathered a fair idea of just where our potential support lay. A month before polling day, we began the campaign, with the enormous advantage of voluntary help from a Co-operative Party member, Vic Butler, who is a trained agent. This is what we did:

(1) We attacked. From the beginning we had the Tories on the defensive.

(2) We kept rigidly to timetable. In February, before the campaign opened, we had delivered "50 Things Labour Has Done;" in March we had staged a public meeting in the Town Hall, with Sir Hartley Shawcross as the draw; the candidate and the chief canvasser called on all the members to ask them to start talking Labour in queues, buses, at work, everywhere. This preliminary work helped to make the public Labour-conscious just before we wanted them Election-conscious. The campaign itself lasted three weeks: the initial canvass was over in ten days, after which we concentrated on the "Outs" and "Doubtfuls." As well as the canvass, we kept up a constant flow of topical leaflet deliveries.

Letter to Voters

(3) Our literature was kept simple, and we used shapes to attract attention. For example, our posters read simply: "Richards, Richards, RICHARDS for Labour, Labour, LABOUR," printed in two triangles of graded type, small at the top, getting bigger and bigger.

From a distance this looked like a Christmas Tree. Our window-bills were printed diagonally, and stuck diamond-wise in the windows. So people looked at our posters and leaflets out of curiosity for their shapes.

(4) Slogans were kept simple too. "Labour Means Fair Shares;" "Labour Reduces Rates WITHOUT Reducing Social Services;" "Three Have Done Well, FOUR Could Do MORE" (referring to the fact that we had three out of fifteen seats on the Council). Explanatory wording was simple as well. Clarity, not dignity, was our keynote.

(5) We started a leaflet war about the Rates. On the very day the Tory Council passed a 2s. in the £ reduction, we rushed out a leaflet pointing out that the Labour Government and the Labour M.C.C. had made this possible. The Tories replied, of course, but we had got in first, and they were put on the defensive. We replied to their reply, and they to that, and public interest was secured.

(6) In addition to four special leaflets delivered at intervals, we sent duplicated letters, personally signed by the candidate, to special categories of voter: one to those on the Service Register, one to staff in the hospital where we couldn't canvass, one to those in the worst condemned houses, etc.

(7) *On the eve of poll, the Agent signed personal letter (printed) to every "Promised" vote, telling them that our canvass returns showed a narrow Labour Majority. This brought every Labour supporter into direct touch with the Master Mind, made them feel that the Election was a common campaign, for the success of which they now had an individual responsibility to vote.*

(8) Lastly, we went all out for the WORKING-CLASS vote, and left any wobbling middle-class voters to follow the enthusiasm engendered. This enthusiasm was helped enormously by scores of children, who mobbed us, cheered us, booted the other side and thoroughly enjoyed themselves on our behalf. There is no doubt that we were on the side of the working-class children, and their parents responded. Our total costs were £104 for the five wards.

Bringing In the Youth

By REG UNDERHILL, West Midlands Organiser

How many Parties have information on the League of Youth? Most have but little knowledge of its structure and place within the Party, or on procedure for the establishment of branches.

Some may query the need for a League of Youth. It must, however, be admitted that from its ranks many members have progressed to key positions, including a number of our Regional Organisers, Members of Parliament and Party Agents.

Many Parties bemoan the lack of youth membership, but take no positive steps to get it. If the League of Youth is not the way, what is the alternative? Every Party must face this question.

Brighter Ward Meetings

To achieve a virile organisation we must attract more young men and women into the Party. Too often our ward meetings are dull and stodgy with only a bare handful of under thirties. That is not good enough. Often these stodgy ward meetings fail to interest new members in the older age groups, never mind the under twenty-ones!

Where stands the League of Youth to-day? From local initiative over 300 branches have been formed since the General Election. Many are doing very good work. Within most regions there have been established Regional or Area Committees to assist development and to arrange educational and similar activities.

But a mere handful of three hundred branches cannot be regarded with complacency.

If a League of Youth, with its constitutional set-up, is not immediately possible, what is the alternative? We

DEADLINE

Don't forget the deadline for the receipt of all contributions — the 15th of the month for publication the following month.

That applies to advertisements as well as articles. Send them all to The Editor, Labour Organiser, Transport House, Smith Square, S.W.1.

Let's hear what your Party is doing!

have two possibilities. First, Parties can so enliven their activities as to attract young people into membership and activity, or second, there may be set up a Youth group with no constitutional basis of its own within the Party except to arrange social and educational activities for younger members.

Your Party's Job

Every encouragement should be given to the formation of League of Youth branches, but as an alternative, Parties may organise Youth groups without adopting the League constitution. But such groups cannot have the status of a League branch or representation on the General Committee.

What is your Party doing to attract the countless thousands of young supporters into association and activity with our Socialist Movement? Do not ignore this problem. It is real and must be faced. This is a local responsibility. *A League, a Youth group, or brighter activity?*

OUR WOMEN ESSAYISTS

There was a magnificent response to this year's essay competition organised by the Northern Area Advisory Councils. Over 90 essays by members of Women's Sections were received, Seaford being the leading Division with the grand total of 21 essay writers, and West Hartlepool the leading Women's Section with six entrants. Many Sections devoted a night to discussing the set essay subject—"How Britain Cares for Her Children."

Congratulations to the four essay winners, whose prize will be a scholarship for one week at the Area's School for Labour Women. They are Mrs. A. E. Venables (West Hartlepool), Mrs. Souness (Carlisle), Mrs. Akenhead (Wingate) and Mrs. J. Bowman (Morpeth). Better luck next time to those who were unsuccessful this year and hopes are running high for the record number of 100 essays in 1949.

Here is one of the enterprising activities undertaken by the women of the Party which Mrs. Cathie Ure asked to hear about in last month's "Organiser." But there are plenty more, so let's hear about them too.

At G.H.Q.

By COLIN MACPHEE

OUTSIDE the top ranks of Government, few men in Britain can be carrying a heavier load of responsibility than Morgan Phillips. Week after week, he gets through a volume of work and a variety of assignments that would tax the energy of ten ordinary mortals. Now with the General Election looming ahead, it's a fair bet that the pressure on our redoubtable Secretary will intensify rather than decrease in the days ahead.

Mr. Phillips himself would be the first to admit that his loyal and competent staff in the Secretary's Department has been a big factor in the very considerable success he has achieved since taking over the Party secretariate four years ago. Their names don't make headlines, but the smooth-running of the whole Party machine owes a great deal to the efficient, behind-the-scenes work of "The Few" in the Secretary's Department.

Second-in-command in the Department is Luckhurst Scott, who has been longer on the Party staff than anyone now in Transport House. He came in June, 1918, as Secretary to Arthur Henderson and has been "in" on all the Party's top secrets ever since.

Arthur Henderson's Work

MR. SCOTT is shy of publicity but he can be eloquent on one subject—the unique qualities of Arthur Henderson, Labour's Master Builder. "His achievement in welding a host of diverse elements into the powerful striking force that is the modern Labour Party must never be forgotten," he told me, adding that "Uncle Arthur's" special qualities were recognised not only in the Movement but by such as Lloyd George and the pundits of the Foreign Office and the League of Nations. "Lloyd George regarded A.H. as the greatest political organiser in Britain," Mr. Scott added.

Mr. Scott has handled much of the Party correspondence over the past thirty years and accordingly he can give you a pretty shrewd idea at any time of the mood of the Movement. His verdict to-day is that never was the Party more united or in a healthier state generally.

"Running through the correspondence," Mr. Scott told me, "is a solid sense of satisfaction that our Movement has produced as good a Government as this one. That is something new for such a critically-minded body as the Labour Party.

"In pre-war days the resolutions of protest and the amount of criticism we received on policy matters was vastly greater than it is to-day." Mr. Scott hastened to add that this wasn't a demand for more resolutions!

Expert on Constitution

AMONG a variety of jobs, some of a confidential nature, Mr. Scott prepares the agendas and minutes for the meetings of the N.E.C., and also does much of the preparatory work for Annual Conference. He is busy on this last job now, assisted by Mollie Gower, who collects and collates delegates' forms, watches for the eligibility of delegates, etc.

In doing this job our young Miss Gower has become something of a constitutional lawyer and woe betide any D.L.P. which tries to slip anything across.

Personal secretary to Mr. Phillips is Maxine Harrison, who deals with correspondence and a lot of other jobs and is a charming but formidable barrier to those importunates who would bother "The Boss" unduly. She has been at Transport House for two years and before that was in the A.T.S. She is an ex-League of Youth-er.

Another personality in the Department is Mrs. Dinah Malnick, who is Mr. Scott's secretary. She had the unusual job of being in charge of a youth hostel before coming to Transport House, and she is still very much of an outdoor girl at week-ends and holidays. Mr. Scott describes her as "the perfect secretary" and I cannot say fairer than that.

The Department also handles the arrangements for the Summer Schools, and here again Mollie Gower plays a big part. This year something like 1,000 students, many of them on D.L.P. scholarships, will be attending our Summer Schools as against 655 students last year.

The Big Job Ahead

MISS GOWER not only does much of the preparatory work of correspondence and allocating places, but she also attends the Summer Schools as hostess. This year she will be at Bangor and Leith Hill. She has proved so popular at this job that a number of prospective students have been vigorously insistent on attending "the Summer School that Miss Gower goes to."

Nor must I forget the youngest member of the Department, 17-year-old June Tyhurst, our office Ray of Sun-

shine No. 1. June does the filing for the Department.

It is clear that the pressure on Mr. Phillips and his Department will be pretty severe from now on until the General Election. Just to think of the multifarious jobs which have to be done makes me shudder. Much of the Department's work, although vital and exacting, cannot in the nature of things be dramatic or exciting, or even widely publicised, but the Movement can be confident that there's not only a good Commander at G.H.Q. There's also a good team.

My Tribute to Labour's Women

By TOM HOLLIMAN, Hon. Sec., Harrow East D.L.P.

"We don't give half enough praise to our women," says the writer of this article.

On a bright clear evening last spring a small group of women stood at a main road corner in Harrow Weald, in earnest conversation. It was a Women's Section Canvassing Squad.

One of the group was a sprightly young thing in the early sixties, full of beans. On her head perched a saucy little "Easter Bonnet," in keeping with her vivacious personality. The little "tit-for-tat" bobbed merrily, almost as if it were dancing on the very spirit of a veteran socialist, bubbling up through that silvery hair.

Surely a typical example of those grand women who have carried the fight through from the early beginnings of women's suffrage, through the struggling early days of the Labour Movement, battling not only against the prejudices of women in politics but, as working class housewives, also fighting on another front to keep their homes and families going in the stringent times of free enterprise, with freedom to starve the paramount feature. *Our movement owes more than it can ever repay to our stalwart Women's Sections.*

Active Workers

In our own local party we have many like the lady in the Easter bonnet, and one who still remains very active comes to mind, Mrs. Lewis, Chairman of Wealdstone South Ward.

Her work began over 21 years ago, and since then she held the office of Social Secretary to the old Local Labour Party for about 12 years, was a delegate to the Central Advisory Committee and the Trades Council for many years, a prominent member of the Co-op Guild, Social Secretary to the Central Party.

The word refreshments and Mrs. Lewis are linked wherever Labour Socials in Harrow are mooted. She not only fixes the supply but wades in, cutting sandwiches, brewing tea, and helps in that tail-end job, the washing-up. There are no frills about her, she believes in the practical expression rather more than theory, and it is so with her speech, plain, straightforward, and to a newcomer perhaps almost brusque, but to those who know her just the sincerity of a good socialist. She means what she says and is always quick enough to say it, a fighter.

It is clear from her face, small featured, rather sallow, deep, brown, live eyes, determined chin, broad forehead crowned with white hair, that life has not been too kind, she has had her ups and downs but undaunted she carries on, finding time amidst a crowded day for her contribution towards the movement. "One who never fails on the promised job. May she continue for another 21 years, the party will be the richer for such service.

IF I WERE STARTING AGAIN—!

An Agent's First Job

By HAROLD CROFT

"What sort of things could a newly-appointed Agent start on?" "What does a new Agent do?" This was a question recently posed to me by a keen and bright girl who thinks of applying for an Agent's post.

She was aware that before a new Agent can usefully plan or venture on new schemes, he or she would need to be cautious in estimating the calibre of the Party, the characteristics of its officers and members and local tradition. This naturally takes a little time and, meanwhile, what can the Agent do to meet any modest hopes of improvement?

Though the query appeared on the face of it, one of those simple and tantalising questions which are so hard to answer cogently, it was not one of those provoking questions, to which not all the experience of life has minted an adequate answer, and which a novice sometimes glibly asks and receives your vagueness with a dim and condescending pity. No, it was a fair, practical question and merited a helpful reply.

"Plan" Your Meetings

To answer it one would need to think of and isolate some commonplace lack or problem that is fairly general in parties. It would then be possible to suggest that a new agent would be on safe lines in tackling such a lack or fault. It would be useful, creditable and proof against criticisms of rushing in where elders would halt.

I suppose the above may represent my thoughts in the split second before I plunged with the remark—"Well if you were the producer of a concert or a play you would think intensely about the items and presentation, and would rehearse again and again for the production.

In this there is a cue as to what the Agent might do. How many Agents or Secretaries "plan" or "rehearse" for an Executive or General Committee Meeting. But these meetings are important, and the presentation and implementation of business is a matter requiring definite prior thought and consideration, indeed it can require some first-class organising.

Balancing the Business

It is not a mere matter of compiling items for an agenda, it is a question of balancing the business, of throwing some aspects into strong relief, it is a problem of regarding the qualities of officers and delegates, of assessing the temper or psychology of the committee.

The new Agent is the "producer" for the party meetings. His task is apparent. He can forthwith seek to raise gradually the level and efficiency of the transaction of business by the Committee. Like a stage-manager who must produce a good show the new Agent can concentrate on the preparations for the party meetings to achieve a show so good that interest is created and members become keen to attend.

Here then is an answer to the question as to what a new Agent can do before getting down to the organisation in general. He can give attention to the betterment of committee business. Though this sounds commonplace, remember it can change the calibre of a party and make it a vibrant organisation. His initial tasks can be simple and straightforward. Some of these will be outlined in a further article.

(To be continued)

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Why Don't We Ask For More T.U. Money?

By E. A. H. RUDGE, Secretary-Agent, Burnley L.P.

I am writing this article concerning the financial aspect of an agent's job in view of the resolutions appearing on the agenda paper of the Annual Conference and the statements that the Party is endeavouring to double the number of full-time agents in order to maintain a Labour Government at the next General Election.

I am a new agent and probably after a length of time I will have made my own financial position secure and thereafter would not care what happened elsewhere. But the facts have to be faced by the movement that the uncertainty which new agents often meet in raising their own salaries is bound to react when a considerable increase of agents is considered.

In many respects I am fortunate in the constituency where I am employed. A trade union pays an allowance and affiliation fees are, due to the excellent work of previous agents, probably amongst the highest in the country. In spite of this I will say that income is still insufficient and that it should be increased from sources quite able to pay. Individual membership fees should assist a party, but when a new agent takes over he often has a low membership and it takes time to make a solid increase.

Big T.U. Funds

What sources are able to pay? The Trade Unions, of course, and at the present time they are building up funds far in excess of anything known before. It does not require a mind skilled in the history or functions of trade unionism to know that the old negotiating basis has disappeared and a system of national negotiations involving some measure of governmental assistance has taken its place.

And the maintenance of a Government which shows some measure of sympathy to the Trade Union movement will help to further increase the funds, but the amounts paid to the organisations working to maintain that

Government can be fairly described as paltry.

What Party Secretary or Agent has not had the feeling that affiliations are often paid as a "charity" and due to the kindness of heart of Branch Secretaries? How many branches completely underestimate their membership to lessen the amount of their affiliations, which are often based on a ridiculously low fee?

The National Executive of the Party must accept some responsibility for this financial position as they should have tackled the problem of security for party agents long ago.

What did Sir Joseph Hallsworth say at the last (Margate) Party Conference when appealing for finance: "I am quite sure that the Executive Committee are behaving in a very modest manner this afternoon. They have never come forward with burning enthusiasm for financial changes, or I feel sure they would have received more on earlier occasions than they have done."

To Agents working in constituencies having to run all these whist drives, prize draws, etc., running the risk of contravening laws, upsetting rigid-minded party members with such high moral codes and wondering if sufficient money can be scraped together to meet the bills the above words at Margate must have salted a very open wound.

The last few months have taught me that political agents, particularly Labour agents at the present time, require high moral standards, exceptional legal knowledge and tact if their party is to be successful. The days of the Labour movement when boundless enthusiasm carried everything before it are gone and organisation only will maintain a Labour Government at the next election.

And that organisation is too often based on individuals who have to give time on seven days of the week at all hours and have continual financial worries. This is not necessary if the party faced up to the problem squarely.

Operation Doorstep

By T. NIHILL, Secretary, Bexley D.L.P.

With a membership which has now topped the 4,000 mark, Bexley's canvassing methods are showing grand results.

The Bexley D.L.P. is made up of six Wards, each Ward having its own Chairman, Secretary, Organiser, Social Secretary and Treasurer. All Wards elect delegates to the General Management Committee on the basis of number of members. The officers already mentioned are all represented at D.L.P. level in addition to our Election Agent and Press Officer.

Each Ward is broken down into a number of Polling Districts which consist of a few roads with an individual member in charge. His job is to keep the area under his charge supplied with literature, and in cases where a member cannot attend his Ward to pass on any complaints or suggestions. In election times he distributes poll cards and election addresses and makes it his job to see that all his members have voted.

For a membership canvass, each Ward organises its own canvassing team under the direction of the Ward Organiser, and all our experience shows beyond doubt that the finest method of recruiting new members is on the "knocker." There are thousands of potential members who are reluctant to go along to a strange meeting amongst complete strangers, but a few minutes conversation on the doorstep is often all that is required to bring them into the "fold." Bexley, by the way, contains a complete cross-section of all classes of the community—artisans, business men, shop assistants and so on.

Helping the Canvassers

Each team is equipped with a set of canvasser's notes containing answers to many of the questions which cause local heartburnings, i.e., number of houses completed, rate assessment, unpaved roads, etc. It is impressed upon all canvassers where they do not know the answer to any question, not to make a guess at it, but to write it down together with the questioner's name and address so that an answer may be taken to them later. In most cases it is arranged for at least one of the sitting Councillors in each Ward to go round with each team, as he is often

able to supply the answer to many of the questions of local interest.

It was found that difficulty was experienced by some canvassers in opening up the question of membership on the doorstep and most of the stereotyped methods are certainly a little barefaced. We are fortunate in having a News Sheet published by the D.L.P. price 1d., which forms an excellent introduction. If the person buys a copy it is easy to lead up to the question of membership, while if they decline it you are obviously wasting your time and had better knock next door.

M.P.'s Fireside Talks

The "Bexley News," to give it its correct title, publishes articles from our members, Ward notices of activities and events, and extracts from the Labour Press. It is one of the means whereby we keep our members together after we have "made them." Another means is by Ward Socials, discussion groups and by the co-operation of the Bexley Labour Group which ensures that at least one of the sitting Councillors in each Ward attends his Ward Meeting to give a Group report and answer questions and complaints from the floor.

The G.M.C. arranges socials, dances, etc., to help in knitting the Wards together and also an annual bazaar whose stalls are taken by the Wards, Women's Sections and Guilds who supply all the articles. All profits go to Party Funds and this is always a great function exciting great interest in the Division. Our Parliamentary representative, Ashley Bramall, M.P., gives a report back meeting every month to the electorate where many of the more highly contentious questions which might face canvassers can be answered. *In addition he holds a series of "Fireside Talks" in the homes of our members which have proved very fruitful. Finally, I should like to pay tribute to the men and women of the rank and file who are always ready to turn out and carry the "Torch of Freedom" from door to door very often without recognition or thanks.*

Building Up Our Party

By Coun. Mrs. M. BALL, Hon. Secretary, Barking D.L.P.

Barking has just joined the exclusive group of D.L.P.s with 3,000 or more members. Here are some of the recruiting methods used by this up-and-coming party.

Our membership drive has been conducted not from the Divisional Party, but from the Wards. Propaganda grants were made and no reasonable request was refused. Incidentally, Wards are allowed to return 10 per cent, or £1 per month of Ward Contributions for propaganda purposes.

This in the main is used to circulate a monthly or quarterly broadsheet to existing members, a very useful means of retaining the interest of those members who are not inclined or able to attend Ward meetings. Two methods have been used. My own Ward (Manor), successful in building its membership from 150 at the end of the war to 650 at present has relied entirely on leaving, some four or five days prior to a canvass, a typewritten letter setting out the aims and objects of our Party and its method of working.

An imaginary resolution is traced from member to ward—ward to Divisional Party—Divisional Party to Conference. This has proved an excellent approach. Emphasis is laid on quarterly contributions of 1/6. Again this has been successful and over 600 of our members pay in this manner. The collector's task is eased and the result achieved last year of £157 18s. would refute the suggestion that this method tends to lose money to the Party.

Leaflets and Loudspeaker

Parsloes and Cambell Wards have used similar methods, in the case of Parsloes building from some 20 members to over 300, and in Cambell from some 200 to over 600. The monthly system of collection is operated in these two Wards.

In Gascoigne Ward a somewhat different method is used. Here printed leaflets are delivered and followed by a mass canvass with the use of the Party's loudspeaker unit. Excellent results have been achieved, and in this Ward, whose pre-war membership rarely exceeded 100, can now claim to well over 500 members. If, in other Wards, progress has not been so spectacular, sound work has been done. Longbridge Ward, our opponents' strongest area, boast a healthy Party membership of nearly 200, whilst in Abbey, Park and Eastbury fresh plans

are under way to equal the progress of other Wards.

Attractive Ward Meetings

Monthly meetings are held in all Wards, and the method adopted in most Wards of devoting the first hour of the meeting to routine business and the following hour and a half to a speaker, debate, brains trust or other similar idea is proving increasingly attractive to members.

Weekly meetings are held by our two flourishing Women's Sections and are the means of securing the adherence of many women comrades.

We have been fortunate in securing the attendance at public meetings of, besides our own and local M.P.s, Harold Wilson, Aneurin Bevan, Harold Laski and Hugh Dalton. For the last three speakers we have been able to use our local Technical College Hall, whose capacity of 900 has proved barely sufficient on each occasion.

Finally, the social side is not neglected and every Saturday will find one or more Wards running socials or dances.

We look forward to the future with confidence, sure in our belief of achieving our target of 5,000 individual members in Barking.

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Biggest-Ever Union Conference

By L. H. M. HILLIARD, General Secretary, Agents' Union

This year's conference of the Union looks like being the best ever. A record number of applications have been made for Agents' credentials for the Labour Party's conference. Since so many Agents will be at Scarborough this year we can anticipate a representative meeting.

There will be much to discuss. The Executive Committee's report covers a wide field of negotiation and raises many important issues so we can confidently anticipate some lively, and I hope, constructive discussion. Last year the conference was in two sessions and we are repeating this arrangement this year. We shall meet on Saturday, May 15th, at 7.30 p.m., and again on Sunday, May 16th, at 10 a.m. at the Lecture Hall, Central Library, Vernon Road, Scarborough, where we shall be very pleasantly accommodated in a well-appointed meeting hall.

All Fixed Up

Reports, agendas, and credentials will be issued to all members on May 1st, and all Districts will be meeting resolutions and possible amendments and the Report. As it happens, only London District has submitted motions this year and these range over the provision of full-time secretarial assistance for the General Secretary, the recruitment and training of Agents, and finally, an Agent's right to speak at annual Conference of the Labour Party. The Executive Committee have amendments to the first and the last of these resolutions and we can certainly anticipate discussion on the last two, which the Executive will encourage, in order that we may learn the views of the members generally.

Members have availed themselves

fully of the service provided in connection with the booking of accommodation and something like 150 reservations have been made at the time of writing, involving a good deal of detail work. Some rather amusing things have happened in this connection and this has compensated to some extent for the extra effort and worry involved. We have completely filled the "Fairview" Hotel, which we booked originally, and have taken a fair proportion of the available accommodation at the "Granville" Hotel. Both are near to one another and are readily accessible to the Spa, where the Party Conference is to be held. I am sure members will find themselves comfortably cared for and will enjoy their stay. It would be a convenience if members would write me at once informing me at about what time they plan to arrive at either of these hotels in order that I may let them know, and suitable arrangements can be made in connection with meals.

Unfortunately, we have made no progress in connection with our proposed members' re-union. The difficulty has been in connection with a suitable hall or ballroom, and despite a personal trip to Scarborough recently, it has been found impossible to make arrangements, and negotiations have broken down. It may be possible, however, to arrange some kind of informal gathering at the "Fairview" during the week, although the games room and dance floor here is really very small, not being comparable with the "Glenwood" at Margate last year.

Charter Proposals

We have now disposed of all the outstanding matters arising from the Union's Charter proposals and a full statement has been included in the Annual Report. The E.C. feel that members will be satisfied with the result of the negotiations and will be glad to learn that, on the whole, the new salary scales have been well received and are being operated.

During the last few weeks discussions have gone on in connection with the provision of special financial assistance to those constituencies at present employing an Agent and where difficulties of a temporary nature might arise as

DO ALL YOUR
KEYWORKERS
READ THE
"LABOUR
ORGANISER"?

a result of the operation of the new rates. The union has now received an assurance that in these cases, and after investigation by the District Officers, a special grant may be made.

We have also found, in negotiation, ready acceptance of the necessity to modify the existing Hastings agreement and information on this point has been made available to the Districts. All-round increases are likely and this will, I think, meet the demands of those districts who wanted revision in the light of present circumstances.

Boundary revision and the provisions of the Representation of the Peoples Bill will certainly feature in our thoughts at Whitsun, and shortly after conference the necessary re-organisation of the constituency parties should be completed. Members will be glad to learn that the Union has conveyed its views relative to Agents who will be displaced, or become redundant, under redistribution and have received an assurance from the Adjustments Board that all possible steps will be taken to safeguard the interests of Agents so affected.

READERS' FORUM

Too Old at 45?

In the bad old capitalist days workers were too old at 40. How often did our propagandists make the most of this, but now it's all different, or is it? The National Insurance Act encourages over 65's to go on working for an increase in pension later; we are all asked to remain at work to help the country

when we would otherwise retire; quite a few trade union leaders and lesser officials are getting jobs at from £5,000 downwards instead of retiring, all of which I agree with, provided they are qualified for the job. But what is the attitude within the Party?

Posts are being advertised almost every day and some state an age limit very much below 65. Posts that should be looked upon as promotion for long service and experience, but 50 and in a recent case 45 years of age, rule out applicants who are not informed by the advertisement that there is an age limit. Some of the appointments made recently cannot possibly have had the experience of many agents who now have no chance of promotion because of their age.

I know of a case, not an agent, who sold his house and insurance policies to keep his Party paper going and is still just managing to carry on, while his advertising manager now holds a £5,000 job. What do the readers of "L.O." and Agents think of the age limit? Is 45, 50 or even 60 too old under the "New Look" in the Labour Movement? "Mossieil."

[Where the employment includes membership of a superannuation scheme, an age limit is imposed on new entrants. This is purely to keep the scheme actuarially sound.

Superannuation schemes can prosper only if they take in new young members whose contributions make it possible for the retired members to draw their superannuation.—EDITOR.]

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- ,, 17.—Find the Lady (Musical Revue).
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This is your Theatre, so book early for the above shows. If you are not aware of our special terms to Labour Parties, etc., write to The Manager, New Cross Empire, S.E.14. Let us help to plan your social activities. It is our job to help you enjoy your leisure hours.

Our Socialist Week

By ERIC N. VOYSEY, Kingston D.L.P.

Kingston D.L.P. will run a Socialist Week as part of a big publicity and recruiting drive this summer.

The idea originated with a group of young delegates. Having got approval, they went ahead and arranged an attractive programme of events in Kingston, Surbiton and New Malden.

Varied events will cater for each borough every day and Socialist Week's final attraction will be a Rally at the Kingston Empire Theatre on Sunday evening, 13th June, with prominent speakers, including the Minister of Supply, the Rt. Hon. George Strauss, M.P., an old friend of Kingston. Already several other prominent speakers have agreed to come.

The week will begin on Monday, 7th June, when David Rees-Williams, one of Surrey's M.P.s, undertakes to report on his Stewardship at the Colonial Office and it is hoped to have a coloured speaker giving his angle on the problem, while John Edwards, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, and Councillor Irene Marcouse of the "go ahead" Holborn Borough Council, will be among our other speakers.

Sports and Ball

Among others, Arthur Lewis, M.P., George Elvin, Parliamentary Labour candidate in 1945, and Professor Lord Chorley are expected to visit Kingston division during Socialist Week.

In addition, there will be novel variations, including many open air meetings, a Women's Rally on the Wednesday afternoon, probably an open air sports event on the Saturday afternoon but certainly a Labour Ball in each borough on the Saturday evening, and a Youth Forum the night before, Friday, 11th June, with Barbara Castle, M.P.

The group was entrusted with making the programme and got outside co-operation, but then secured willing help from the local Labour parties in all the details necessary to make Socialist Week a success. They asked for, and got, such organisations to synchronise a recruiting campaign with other preparations. Already good results are reported.

Kingston D.L.P. is confident it will get widespread publicity and make a real impact on the political thinking of the area which is its charge. We hope, by the sheer news value of our Socialist Week to get a good show in the Surrey Press, which in the past has persistently played down the Labour Party.

We also hope to recruit at least 300 new members each in Kingston, Surbiton, and New Malden.

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One copy Parker's "Election Agent and Returning Officer" and one copy "Modern Electioneering Practice" by Henry Houston and Lionel Vallah.

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85, NOT OUT

Another Surrey octogenarian is a claimant for the title of the Party's oldest active worker.

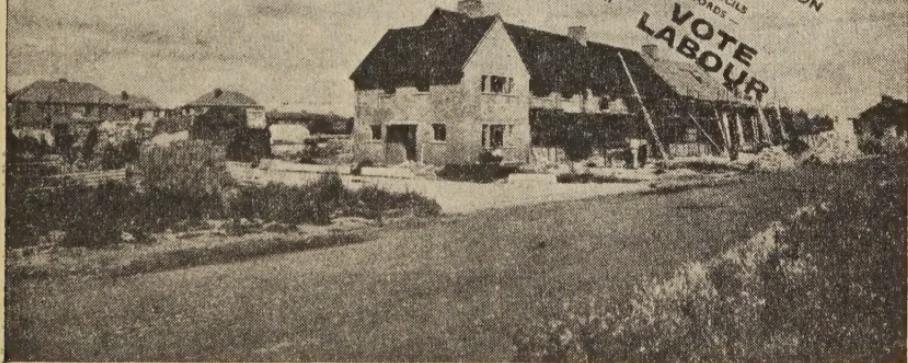
He is 85-year-old John Pearson, of Kingston-on-Thames, who, says "The Surrey and Middlesex Clarion," "has the appearance and energy of a man twenty years his junior."

Mr. Pearson not only attends Party meetings, but also is at work regularly in a local grocery firm.

Last month we described how Mrs. Hyde, of Cobham L.P., is still collecting "subs" at 83. Can any other county beat Surrey's record of octogenarian enthusiasm?

HOUSING PROGRESS REPORT

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